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## BOOK NOTICES.

*Nagualism: A Study in Native American Folk-lore and History.*  
By Daniel G. Brinton, A.M., M.D., LL.D., D.Sc., &c. Philadelphia, 1894, McCalla, 8vo, 66 pp.

Nagualism was a powerful and mysterious cult which united Mexican and Central American tribes, belonging to different linguistic stocks, into organized opposition against the government and religion of their conquerors. The members of this intertribal organization were bound together by strange faculties and an occult learning which placed them on a par with the famed thaumaturgists and theodidacts of the Old World, and which preserved even into our days the thoughts and forms of a long-suppressed ritual.

The terms *nagual*, *nagualism*, *nagualist* are not Nahuatl, but of southern origin. A *nagual* was a personal guardian spirit, a personal totem, chosen in accordance with fixed rules and by consultation of an elaborate calendar, which was used mainly in astrological divination.

The nagualists were powerful enchanters, whom the clergy believed to be in league with the devil and who were thought to be able to transform themselves into beasts. They used in their operations an intoxicant, *peyotl*, and the seeds of a plant called *ololiuhqui*. Intoxication was an essential part in many of these severe rites. Under the old régime and before the coming of the Spaniards nagualists were especially devoted to the native cult; but it is Dr. Brinton's opinion, which he sustains with great research, that on the appearance of a foreign race and a new religion a new *motif* was given to this old cult. Those most interested in it turned their sorceries and enchantments with organized, terrific, and often with successful energy against a common enemy. Even the rituals of the Catholic church were travestied in the nagual ceremonies. Dr. Brinton gives a charming account of the exalted position assigned to women in this mysterious society. They were not only admitted to the degrees, but often held most important offices. One of them, Maria Candelaria, was among the Tzentsals of Chiapas a native

Joan of Arc. The nagualistic rites were highly symbolic, and the symbols had clearly defined meanings. The most important symbol was fire. Of this Father de Leon says: "If any of their old superstitions has remained more deeply rooted than another in the hearts of these Indians, both men and women, it is this about fire and its worship and about making new fire and preserving it for a year in secret places."

Another symbol still venerated as a survival of the ancient cult is that of the tree. The species held in special respect is the ceiba (*Bombax ceiba*). The conventionalized form of this tree strongly resembles a cross, and this came to be the ideogram of "life."

The serpent was another revered symbol. In Chiapas one of the highest orders of the initiated was that of the *chanes* or serpents.

In reading this learned treatise one is strongly reminded of the studies of Mr. James Mooney, of the Bureau of Ethnology, upon the Ghost dance. There were exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition four transparencies representing men and women going through the Ghost dance ceremonies, many of them swooning. It were easy to transfer these pictures to the scenes of Dr. Brinton's book. The subject is one of great interest to ethnologists, who have to thank Dr. Brinton for bringing together such a harvest of material from a field in which he is easily the chief gleaner.

OTIS T. MASON.

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*The Snake Ceremonials at Walpi.* By J. Walter Fewkes, assisted by A. M. Stephen and J. G. Owens. (*A Journal of American Ethnology and Archaeology.* Vol. iv. Boston and New York, 1894.) Sq. 8°, vi, 126 pp., ill.

Captain Bourke, in 1883, first called the attention of the civilized world to the wonderful snake ceremonial of the Moki or Hopi of Arizona. After his return to the east in that year there appeared in several newspapers articles descriptive of the rite, most of which articles were probably the result of interviews with Captain Bourke. It was not until the following year (1884) that his important work on "The Snake Dance of the Moquis of Arizona" appeared. During the decade following his first